



Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

14 June 2019

Dear Nicola,

Scottish Government support for Chemring and the 'blue light sector'

I am writing to urgently enquire about the Scottish Government's relationship with Chemring Energetics in light of the ongoing protests in Hong Kong.

As you will know, during the protests in 2014, CS Gas used by the police in their brutal attacks against pro-democracy protestors was manufactured by Chemring. It has been widely publicised that CS Gas, among other forceful measures, is being used in police attacks against the civilians currently protesting in Hong Kong. Many of those protesting are minors. Evidence has already emerged and has been published by Amnesty International suggesting that the CS Gas being used at present was indeed produced by Chemring in the UK.

You will also be aware that Scottish Government enterprise funding has been provided to Chemring. Chemring has received £196,355 since 2007, and has received funding in each of the last three years. Chemring also receives free account management services from Scottish Enterprise.

I am aware that the Scottish Government maintains that it does not directly fund munitions. However, as you highlighted in April 2018 in response to questions from Patrick Harvie, Scottish Government funding does help arms firms diversify into the "blue light sector". This sector includes police and security forces. As referenced above, it is the Hong Kong police force, not the Chinese armed forces, who are currently brutally suppressing peaceful protests on the island.

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I have sought to scrutinise the funding provided by the Scottish Government to companies involved in the arms trade. However, information has often not been forthcoming. When I enquired about the purpose of Scottish Enterprise's funding for Chemring, I have been provided with opaque answers. For the funding they received in 2018 I was given only a one-word explanation: "innovation". It therefore remains unclear to me what the funding from the Scottish Government is actually for.

Since March, Scottish Enterprise has introduced new human rights due diligence checks. These checks are designed to assess the human rights record of companies receiving support. It was reported recently that 68 of these checks have been carried out since March, though none have led to companies being disbarred from receiving funding.

I would therefore appreciate if you could address the following points:

- Can you provide me with a detailed explanation of the purpose of the enterprise funding given to Chemring?
- Does the Scottish Government's definition of munitions prevent funding from supporting the manufacture of CS Gas or any components linked to the manufacture or delivery of CS Gas, such as launching or dispersal mechanisms?
- Has a human rights due diligence check been carried out on Chemring, and, if so, will you provide me with a copy of it?
- Does the Scottish Government accept that it is not solely military and paramilitary forces across the world who are responsible for human rights abuses, that in many instances the police and security forces who fall under the Scottish Government's definition of the 'blue light sector' are responsible for grave abuses of civilians and that any human rights assessments should take this reality into consideration?

Kind regards



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